



Tanakh Is Our Story

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TANAKH IS OUR STORY

This dynamic curriculum, created by Herzog Global and UnitEd, is designed to introduce Middle School students in Jewish schools around the world to concepts of Jewish identity through familiarity with our national story. It offers a unique active learning approach to teaching the Tanakh, by connecting to the foundations and heritage of the Jewish Nation.

This program uses cutting-edge pedagogical techniques around storytelling to bring the Exodus story to life for students in Grades 7-10, and it can be easily adapted for younger and older students.

This booklet contains just a small sample from the large selection of materials available to you on our website.



We recommend that you use the digital platform ClassE in your classroom free of charge to run your lessons online. [Click here to see how!](#)

Story 1: We became a nation of slaves – but there is still hope

Unit 1: From an Exalted Position to a Nation of Slaves

What difference does it make where we begin telling the story from?

Exodus Ch. 1: 1-15

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- The Beginning of the Book of Exodus
- Where does My Story Begin?
- Different Perspectives on the Background to Slavery (Journalism Exercise)
- What do we know about Joseph?
- Pharaoh's Decrees & Slavery (Hevruta)
- Zoom Out: The Promise to Abraham
- Ve-hi She'amdah Song Activity



Unit 2: Women Act Courageously Against the Decrees

If you believe in something, go for it!

Exodus Ch.1:16-2:9

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- The Story of Rosa Parks
- The Story of Doña Gracia Nasi
- Coping with Personal Difficulty
- Women Act Bravely (Jigsaw Learning)
- Classroom Discussion on Heroines, Choices and Difficult Situations



Unit 3 - Moses - A Leader Rising from Adversity and Crisis

The leader's concern must be to focus on what is best for their community, rather than on their own best interests.

Exodus Ch.2:11-22

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- Job Description for a Leader / Qualities of a Leader (Wanted Ad)
- The 3 Cases faced by Moses (Discussion & Prof. Nechama Leibovitz Presentation)
- Thinking Routine: Color, Symbol & Image
- Discussion: Does Moses Meet the Criteria you Wrote?
- Not Standing on your Neighbor's Blood



Story 2: The Growth of a Leader

Unit 1: The Bush is Burning

How to make change.

Exodus Ch. 2:23-3:10

[TO THE LESSON >](#)

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- Questions for characters involved in the Egyptian slavery.
- How can the situation change?
- Telling the Story of the Burning Bush (Table + Answers)
- Letters of the Contemporaries
- God speaks to Moses at the Burning Bush (Marking the Verbs)
- Midrashim on the Burning Bush
- Moses' Story on the Map
- What is the Burning Bush
- Hevruta: The Meaning of the Burning Bush + clip from "The Prince of Egypt"
- Concluding Survey & Summary Questions



Unit 2: Refusal to Accept the Mission

How do you go on a mission despite the fears?

Exodus Ch. 3: 1, 11-14, 17

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- Moses as a Shepherd
- Moses' First Response to the Mission
- Additional Details of the Mission
- Back to Back in Moses' Response
- The Signs
- Mission: A Personal Perspective



Unit 3 – A Mission, Despite the Refusal

A disadvantage does not necessarily prevent us from achieving our goals.

Exodus Ch. 4: 10-17, 21-31

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- The King's Speech - What Strengths does a Leader have?
- Reading Theater: The Story of Moses
- Moses' Speech Difficulty (Worksheet for Hevruta)
- Aaron's Role
- The Relationship Between Moses & Aaron (Sibling Tension)



Story 3: Challenges on the Way to Redemption

Unit 1: Embarking on the Mission

It's always darkest just before dawn.

Exodus Chapter 5

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- Let My People Go – The Soviet Union
- Let My People Go – Equal Rights in the US
- Uses of the Phrase "Let My People Go"
- Carrying out the Mission
- Overseers – Peer Discussion: Jewish Kapos during the Holocaust
- Summary Activity for Chapters 1 - 5



Unit 2: Heralding the Redemption

The light at the end of the tunnel.

Exodus Ch. 6: 1-13

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- A Mighty Hand
- Four Stages of Redemption
- Why Don't the Israelites Listen to Moses? What is Slavery? The Story of a Slave (Frederick Douglass) & Video about Slaves
- The Mission Continues Despite the Difficulties
- Crushed Spirits in Our Times



Story 4: The Plagues of Egypt

Unit 1: Who Knows the Plagues?

A strong hand and an outstretched forearm.

Exodus Chapters 7-12

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- The Plagues in Egypt – Presentation
- What happened during each Plague?
- What do you know about the 10 Plagues?
- Preparing a Game about the 10 Plagues
- Timeline of the Plagues in Egypt
- Why & Why Now?
- Reviewing the 10 Plagues
- The Concept of the 10 Plagues
- How Long did the Plagues Last?



Unit 2: Purpose of the Plagues: Recognizing God's Strength

A moral worldview that is contrary to the Egyptian view.

Exodus Chapters 7-12

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- What was the Purpose of the Plagues?
- Egyptian Beliefs & Culture
- Discussion of Egyptian Symbols
- Jewish Culture & Faith
- Did the Plagues Achieve their Goal?



Unit 3: The Plagues as Part of the Israelites' Emerging Identity

The Israelites leave Egypt with new morals and faith.

Exodus Chapters 7-12

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- Am Yisrael's List of Values
- Values to Learn from the first 3 Plagues – Discussion on Gratitude
- Separation from the Egyptians – A Test of Faith
- Borrowing Vessels from the Egyptians
- The Israelites during the Plagues
- In each and every generation....



Story 5: And You Shall Explain to Your Child

Unit 1: Preparing for the Exodus

Taking responsibility to become a free nation.

Exodus Ch. 12-13

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- Preparing for the Exodus – Discussion
- What does Freedom Mean?
- Who Must be More Active?
- The Commandment before the Slaying of the Firstborn
- Why the Commandment, the Lamb and the Blood on the Doorposts?
- A Matter of Time
- Sanctification of the Month (Presentation)
- The Israelites During the Slaying of the Firstborn



Unit 2: The Jewish People Remember the Exodus

Passing the story on to the next generation.

Exodus Ch. 12-13

Lesson Plans & Worksheets:

- The Exodus – What Must We Remember?
- Memory Activity
- David Ben Gurion's Speech to the Peel Commission in 1946 & the Mayflower
- What Will Moses Say to the Israelites?
- Moses' Speech to the Israelites before the Slaying of the Firstborn
- Remembering the Exodus
- Rabbi Sacks on Moses' Speech
- Summary Activity: Remembering & Telling Your Child



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a short asynchronous course
that will teach you how to use
our materials!**

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Am Yisrael's List of Values

A new nation has been born. As they depart from Egypt, the Israelites become a free nation!

Think about the circumstances of the birth of the Jewish Nation.

Use the diagram, which shows the stages the Israelites went through from the days of Joseph, when they were on a high status, following Joseph's role as "Viceroy to Pharaoh", through the decrees of slavery, until the Exodus from Egypt.

Think about what the Israelites went through under Egyptian rule, and what they will go through in the future.



- What qualities and characteristics are required of a nation?
How can one establish a society on morals and values, good foreign relations, a stable economic situation and more?

- Compile a list of values, traits and characteristics that are important for a nation to adopt at the very beginning of its journey.



Values to learn from the plagues of blood, frogs and lice



Review the verses
describing the infliction of
the plague of blood, frogs
and lice in the presentation:

(19) And God said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Take your rod and hold out your arm over the waters of Egypt—its rivers, its canals, its ponds, all its bodies of water—that they may turn to blood; there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone.

(20) Moses and Aaron did just as God commanded: he lifted up the rod and struck the water in the Nile in the sight of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and all the water in the Nile was turned into blood
(Exodus 7:19-20)

(1) And God said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Hold out your arm with the rod over the rivers, the canals, and the ponds, and bring up the frogs on the land of Egypt.

(2) Aaron held out his arm over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.
(Exodus 8:1-2)

(12) Then God said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Hold out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, and it shall turn to lice throughout the land of Egypt."

(13) And they did so. Aaron held out his arm with the rod and struck the dust of the earth, and vermin came upon human and beast; all the dust of the earth turned to lice throughout the land of Egypt.

(Exodus 12-13)

(יט) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אָמֹר אֶל אַהֲרֹן
קח מִטֶּבֶל וְנִטָּה עַל מִימֵי מִצְרַיִם עַל נְהָרָתָם
עַל יַאֲרֵיהֶם וְעַל אֲגָמֵיהֶם
וְעַל כָּל מְקוֹה מִימֵיהֶם וַיְהִי דָם
וְהָיָה דָם בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּבְאֵבָנִים.
(כ) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה'
וַיִּרְם בְּמִטָּה וַיִּךְ אֶת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר לְעֵינֵי פְרָעָה
וְלְעֵינֵי עֲבָדָיו וַיִּהְיוּ כָּל הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר לְדָם.
(שמות ז, יט-כ)

(א) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אָמֹר אֶל אַהֲרֹן נִטָּה אֶת יָדְךָ
בְּמִטָּבָה עַל הַנְּהָרוֹת עַל הַיַּאֲרִים וְעַל הָאֲגָמִים
וְהָעַל אֶת הַצִּפּוֹרְדִּים עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.
(ב) וַיִּט אַהֲרֹן אֶת יָדוֹ עַל מִימֵי מִצְרַיִם
וַתַּעַל הַצִּפּוֹרְדִּים וַתִּכָּס אֶת אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.
(שמות ח, א-ב)

(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אָמֹר אֶל אַהֲרֹן נִטָּה אֶת מִטָּבָה
וְהָךְ אֶת עֹפֶר הָאֶרֶץ וְהָיָה לְכֹנֶם בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.
(יג) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן וַיִּט אַהֲרֹן אֶת יָדוֹ בְּמִטָּהוּ וַיִּךְ אֶת עֹפֶר
הָאֶרֶץ וַתְּהִי הַכֹּנֶם בָּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה כָּל עֹפֶר הָאֶרֶץ הָיָה
כְּנֵם בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.
(שמות ח, יב-יג)

1 What is the common theme in the three plagues when Aaron strikes his rod?

2 Can you explain why Aaron strikes the water and the land, and not Moses?

3 Read Rashi's explanation on the plagues of blood, frogs, and lice.

Rashi writes the following on the plagues of blood and frogs (7:19):

"Say unto Aaron" – Because the river had protected Moses when he was cast into it, therefore it was not smitten by him neither at the plague of blood nor at that of frogs, but it was smitten by Aaron."

And he writes the following on the plague of lice (8:12):

"Say unto Aaron" – The dust did not deserve to be smitten by Moses because it had protected him when he slew the Egyptian, for "he hid him in the sand"; and it was therefore smitten by Aaron."

רש"י כותב כך על מכת דם וצפרדע (ז, יט):
 "אמר אל אהרן" - לפי שהגן הַיָּאֹר על מֹשֶׁה
 כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁלַח לְתוֹכוֹ [כְּשֶׁנִּזְלַד] לְפִיכָּךְ לֹא לָקָה
 [הַיָּאֹר] על יָדוֹ לֹא בָדָם וְלֹא בְּצַפְרָדַּעִים וְלָקָה
 [הַיָּאֹר] על יְדֵי אַהֲרֹן
 ועל מכת כינים הוא כותב כך (ח, יב):
 "אמר אל אהרן" - לֹא הָיָה הָעֵפֶר כְּדָאִי לְלִקּוֹת
 על יְדֵי מֹשֶׁה לְפִי שֶׁהָגַן עָלָיו כְּשֶׁהִרְגָה אֶת הַמִּצְרִי
 וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַּחֹל וְלָקָה על יְדֵי אַהֲרֹן.

According to Rashi, why does Moses not strike the water and the dust of the earth?

We learn an important message from Moses about gratitude;
 acknowledging the good that someone has done for us and returning the favor.
When did you express "gratitude" in your life?

Borrowing Vessels from the Egyptians

(35) "The Israelites had done Moses' bidding and borrowed from the Egyptians objects of silver and gold, and clothing"
(Exodus 12:35)

(לה) ובני ישראל עשו כדבר משה
וישאלו ממצרים כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלות.
(שמות יב, לה)

Assignment:

You are an Israelite reporter writing an article on the preparations for the Exodus from Egypt. Your assignment is to describe the "borrowing of vessels."

A Choose one of the interpretations below to explain why the Israelites borrowed the vessels.

Include the interpretation in the report for the newspaper article.

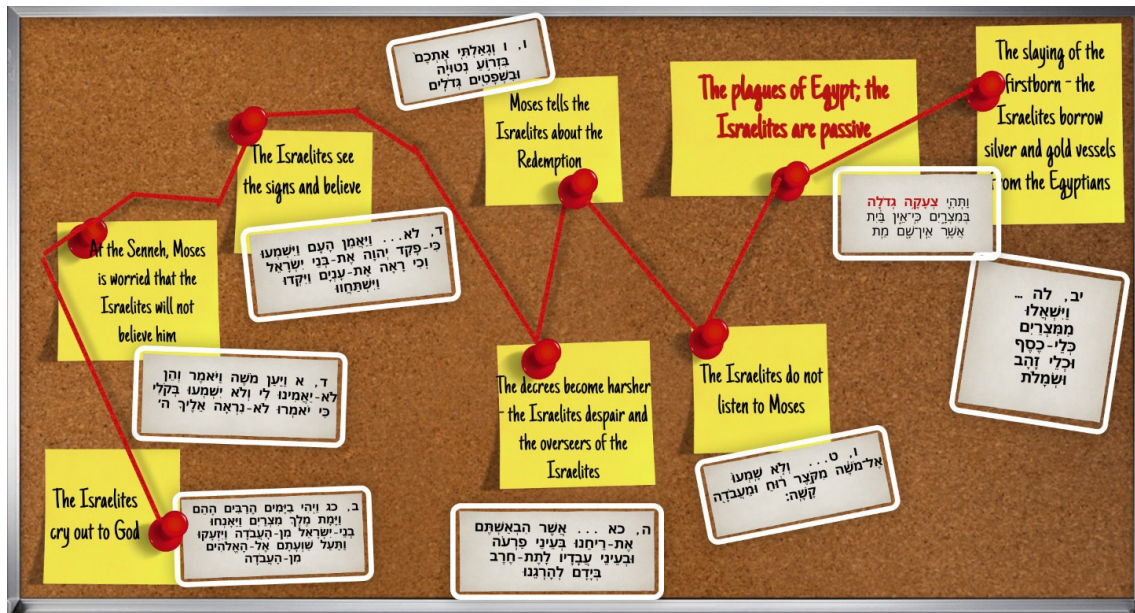
- 1 The Israelites did as Moses the Prophet told them to do. This is how they actually fulfilled God's word.
- 2 This way the Israelites received compensation for their endless work or pay for their years of slavery in Egypt.
- 3 The Israelites intended to return the vessels, but since Pharaoh pursued them and his army drowned in the Red Sea, they considered these vessels to be spoils of war and kept them.
- 4 The Israelites took the tools in exchange for the property they left during the exodus from Egypt (estate, fields and houses).

Open your article with one of the following sentences:

- After the slaying of the firstborn, Moses commanded ...
- I see a woman who ...
- Many of the Israelites are leaving Egypt holding silver and gold vessels ...

The Israelites during the Plagues of Egypt

Look at the diagram and answer the questions:



- 1 Describe the process the Israelites went through, as reflected in the diagram, in your own words:

* Specifically address the matter of borrowing vessels from Egypt.

- 2 We saw that the purpose of the plagues is:

(5) "And the Egyptians shall know that I am God"
(Exodus 7:5)

(ה) "וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'"
(שמות ז, ה)

(5) "...that you may know that there is none like our God"
(Exodus 8:6)

(ו) "...למען ידע כי אין כה' אלהינו."
(שמות ח, ו)

In what way is the recognition of God as the God of Israel, as well as the knowledge that God is the Leader of the world, also important to the Israelites, who are about to become a free nation?

The Israelites become a nation!

An independent nation with its own beliefs and values, which are different to the Egyptian culture.

How do the following three statements express the significant process that the Israelites underwent:

- 1 God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled through the commandment to borrow vessels from the Egyptians during the slaying of the firstborn.
 - 2 It is significant that a nation of slaves is redeemed with great wealth.
 - 3 During the slaying of the firstborn, the Israelites are no longer passive. The nation has received a mission (the one described here and other assignments that the Israelites must do before leaving Egypt).
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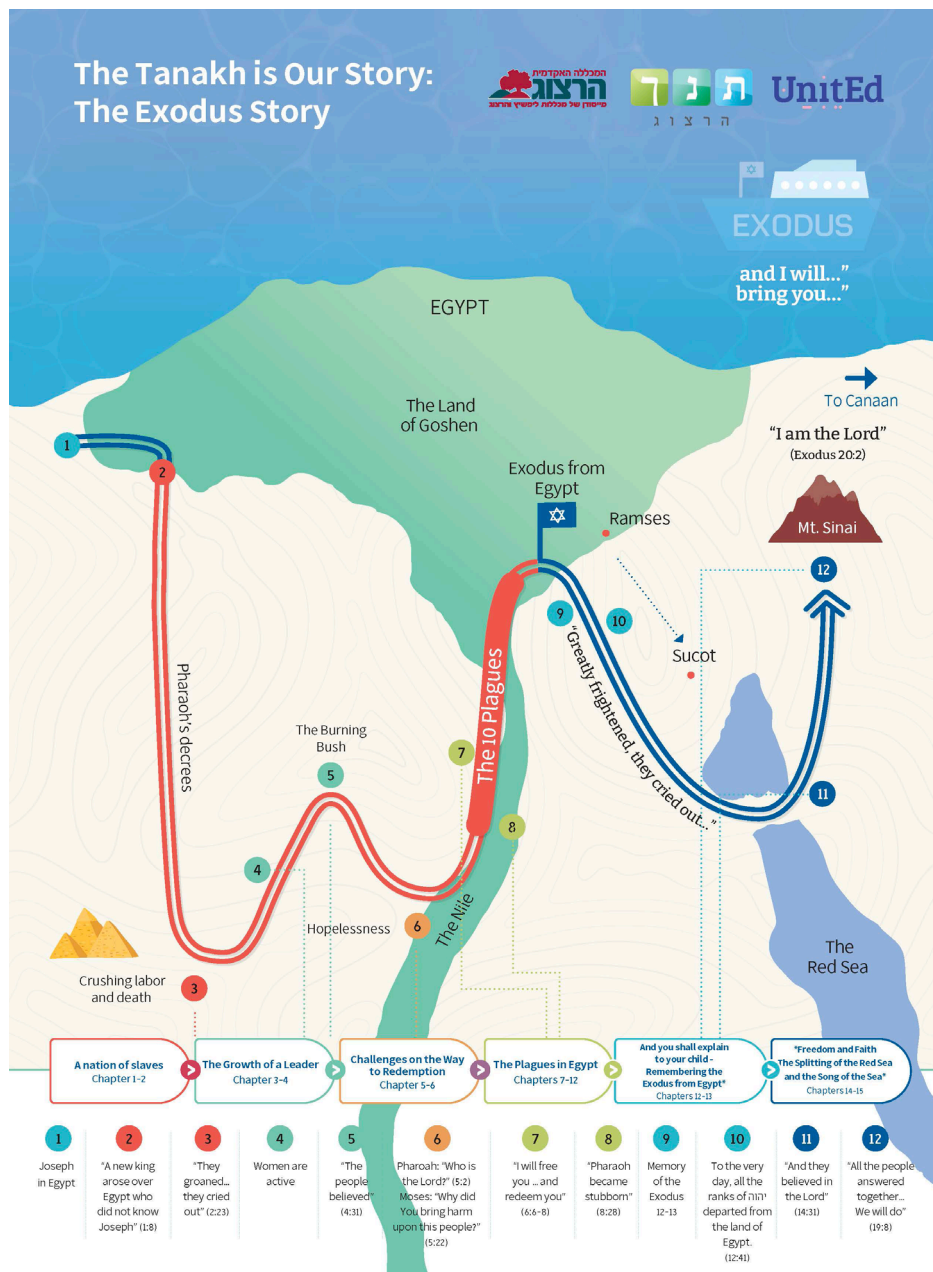
"In each generation a person must view himself ..."

In each and every generation a person must view himself as though he personally left Egypt
(Mishna Pesachim 10:5)

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיִּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ
כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם
(משנה פסחים י"ה)

The story of the Exodus includes many stages.
The Ten Plagues are a central and significant stage in this process.

Review the diagram of the Plagues of Egypt. On the one hand, they are painted in red. On the other hand, they are placed further on in the process towards the Exodus from Egypt.



Suggest answers for the following questions:

Mishna Pesachim, Chapter 10, Mishna 5 states:

In each and every generation a person must view himself as though he personally left Egypt
(Mishna Pesachim 10:5)

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיִּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ
כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם
(משנה פסחים י:ה)

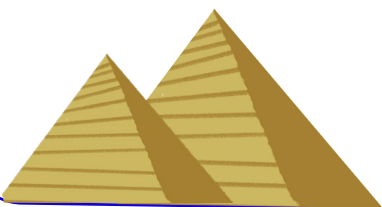
- 1 Why is it so important for a Jewish person to view himself as though he had personally left Egypt?

- 2 How can a Jewish person today view the plagues as something related to his personal life?

So far we have seen two goals in inflicting the plagues:

To redeem the people. To show the Hand of God to the world and to the Egyptians.

Can you think of more reasons for inflicting the plagues?





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*"... If we want our children and our society
to be moral, we need a collective story that
tells us where we came from and what our
task is in the world. "*

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks,
"Telling the Story", Parashat Bo.